MINUTES OF Feb. 7, 1998, MEETING
VFW Club Rooms, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Lacking a quorum, the last meeting on Jan. 10 had no minutes.

About 10 members were present, including Dick Shum, an early member of the chapter.

John Bergeron gave a financial report, showing a balance of $855 in the chapter's account.

Center Street Saloon is no longer selling ripoff tickets for the chapter. However, Bruno's Bar in West Rutland is doing this and has already sent us a check for $300.

John B. has ordered $220 worth of pins for our memorabilia sales. Items are being kept at his store. The chapter has lost 3-4 stores that were part of the Honor the Vet program.

Steve Faye announced that the Regional VVA Conference will be April 3-5 in Bennington and will feature national President George Dugan. Steve encourages as many Chapter 1 representatives to attend as possible.

On State Council matters, Steve reported that the council has proposed a picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington to replace Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Day. The picnic would be held either in June or on Aug. 8, the latter being the normal Recognition Day.

Steve said the sale of the Vietnam Memorial granite rock remnants was proceeding and all 1,000 would probably be gone by the end of the summer.

Next State Council meeting is April 18. Election of council officers is June 19.

It was suggested that Chapter 1 might apply for a grant to research its history. The grant would come from proceeds of the rock remnants mentioned above.

Dick Doyle said the national newsletter, The Veteran, would run an article on Chapter 1 in one of the next two issues.

Dick said chapter membership was in the 140's.

New Business

Andy Moschetto moved to buy a 1/8 page ad for $20 in the DAV's annual booklet. Second: Kym Hoerr. Passed unanimously.

Andy noted that the VFW, which is currently providing us with meeting space, needs members. Chapter 1 will promote the VFW in a coming newsletter.

Referring back to the State Council proposal for a picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home, Dick Doyle moved that the chapter approve $125 for the picnic as a replacement for Recognition Day. However, after some discussion he withdrew the motion until more information is available.

John Bergeron presented details of the final plan for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Rutland. Approximate costs of the plan to this point are about $6,600. Members present agreed on a single flagpole for the memorial.

Kym Hoerr moved that the plan be approved as presented with a single flagpole. Second: Tom Bushey. Approved unanimously.

Discussion turned to establishing an educational outreach program focused on the Vietnam War. Don Wickman, a teacher in the Community College of Vermont, was present and joined the discussion. Several other educators, including David Wolk, Nancy Crandall and Diana Wilson, have expressed interest.

Andy Moschetto moved to set up an Educational Outreach Committee to handle activities such as an essay contest and other school programs. Second: Bill Whitney. Approved unanimously.

Next meeting will be March 7. The April meeting will be April 11.

Adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Jack Crowther, Secretary

VVA CHAPTER 1 MINUTES OF MARCH 7, 1998
VFW Club Rooms, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 6:11 p.m. About 15 members were in attendance, the largest number in a number of months.

New faces among those attending included Gary Swisher and Dave Jarvie, both of Chester.

Minutes from the Feb. 7 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of $855.00 and an ending balance of $815.00.

Tom Reardon moved to pay Rose Valentine $11.40 for an file organizer for Ch. 1 and Tom Lafond $7.50 as a refund for military pins he returned. Seconded and passed unanimously.

John Bergeron recommended we spend another $200 for inventory of military memorabilia to sell as fund-raising items at events such as the approaching Region I conference. Dick Doyle moved to spend the $200. Second: Tom Reardon. Passed unanimously.

Honor the Vet: Tom Reardon has turned over the Honor the Vet program (in which Rutland area merchants give discounts to veterans) to John Bergeron because of his (Tom's) evening work schedule, but John would welcome having someone to contact the merchants and handle this program.

Color Guard: Tom Reardon said the color guard is lining up parades for the year. The first is Loyalty Day, May 3, at 2 p.m. The color guard is down to five people, and sometimes only four are available. Tom will write an article for the next newsletter to recruit some new color guard members.

Membership: Dick Doyle reported that there are 144 members, including new member Mike Klopchin, a state representative from Clarendon. John Wagner is a new life member.

Memorial Committee: John Bergeron reported that Bob Parker, the Rutland architect who has donated his time for the memorial project, would soon be free to continue work on the final design. Ernie Smalley, the contractor donating his services to the project, has some reservations about using pavers for the walk-on area. John Bergeron has ordered the flagpole, two more benches and Lexan boxes for presenting information to the public within the memorial area.

Greg Thayer, chairman of the Rutland City Republican Committee, presented information on a dinner plus debate on school choice, to be held March 23 at the Palms restaurant. Of the $20 price for tickets, $5 will go to VVA Ch. 1. The chapter can also sell 50-50 tickets and military memorabilia as well.

Educational Outreach: Andy Moschetto spoke to Louise Jeffo, who has run a Voice of Democracy essay contest for the VFW for several years and has learned from mistakes. There appear to be a lot of restrictions and liability concerns in the Voice of Democracy contest format. The consensus among members present appeared to be to develop a contest or similar event based on a simple format. No final decisions were reached on this, however.

In connection with working with schools, John Bergeron mentioned that David Wolk, superintendent of schools in Rutland City, has agreed to set up a meeting with teachers and school board members to discuss including Vietnam in the city school curriculum. Indications are the city schools would be willing to purchase videos and other materials for the curriculum. Andy and John will attend the meeting with David Wolk.

Elections for the VVA State Council will be in June, and nominations will be made in April. All positions are open. Steve Faye is currently vice president.

Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Day: John Bergeron will check with Kym Hoerr on the $125 the chapter would be expected to contribute to a picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home. The picnic has been proposed as an alternative to Recognition Day.

Legislation: Coming up for a vote soon in the state Legislature is a bill calling for the POW-MIA flag to be flown from flagpoles owned by the state, along with other flags. The bill has 30 sponsors. Dick Doyle reported on other pending legislation: 1) a bill for a veterans license plate, 2) a bonus of some sort for Vermonters who participated in Desert Storm, 3) a medal for any Vermonter serving in the military.

Tom Reardon invited members to an open house April 25 from 2 p.m. to closing at American Legion Post 50 in Castleton, featuring a buffet and munchies and a live band.

The next meeting will be April 11 at the VFW club rooms. Elections will be held for chapter offices.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Jack Crowther
Secretary

VVA CHAPTER 1 MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 1998
VFW Club Rooms, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 6:06 p.m. About 9 members were in attendance.

A new face among those attending was Harriet Thorne of Chittenden.

Minutes from the March 7 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's report showed a beginning balance of $815.00 and an ending balance of $1,961.05. The increase was mainly due to $1,000 of proceeds from rip-off ticket sales at Bruno's in West Rutland.

Treasurer Jon Pintello will check on the forwarding of the local share of dues from national VVA to make sure we are getting the proper amount.

John Bergeron reported $118 in product sales over the past month. He ordered $213 in additional products to boost Chapter 1's inventory. He's going to check on jackets.

Membership: Dick Doyle reported 145 members through March 27, but noted we are losing 47 members through non-renewal. The chapter will provide a reminder with the next newsletter, encouraging those whose membership has expired to renew. Chapter 1 will reimburse Faie Shepard for dues of her husband, Eugene, who died in March.

Color Guard: The Color Guard will take part in the July 4 Parade in Brandon and perhaps Memorial Day in Fair Haven, as well as Loyalty Day May 3 in Rutland.

Fund-Raising: The recent Debate on School Choice yielded $97 in ticket proceeds and $70 in 50-50 ticket sales. The chapter agreed to seek a concession at the Ethnic Food Festival in Rutland on June 21. The idea is to sell ice cream with maple syrup.

Jake Jacobsen, a founding member of the chapter, was present and recommended the re-establishment of the Ethan Allen 100+ Award, renamed as the Don Bodette 100+ Award. The Ethan Allen 100+ Award was awarded a half-dozen times in the early days of the chapter to honor someone who went "beyond the call of duty" on behalf of Vietnam Veterans or veterans in general. The award featured a plaque with the figure of Ethan Allen. The number 100 symbolizes the 100-plus Vermonters that died in Vietnam. The award also led to two other awards, a scholarship and a humanitarian award, both designed to counter negative images of Vietnam veterans. Jake said he felt the chapter needed to do something to honor the memory of Bodette, the spearhead behind establishment of a community-based VVA organization in the U.S. Don died of cancer on Aug. 10, 1997. After some discussion, Dick Doyle moved to reinstate the Ethan Allen 100+ Award and to call it the Don Bodette 100+ Award. Second: Dave Jarvie. Passed unanimously. Details of the award and the scholarship will be developed.

Dick Doyle described the presentation of awards at the recent Region I Conference in Bennington. One was the Legion of Merit, presented by VVA national President George Duggins

to George Bodette, the father of the late Don Bodette. The award honors Don for leading the way as founder of the VVA's first chapter.

Old Business: Dick Doyle reported that House Bill 624 had been signed by Gov. Dean last week, and there are 51 sites in Vermont where the POW-MIA flag will fly. However, flags will have to be donated. Chapter 1 may donate one of the flags.

Joe Donaldson is a new life member.

Rutland Memorial: It is becoming unlikely that Chapter 1 will not meet its original Memorial Day day target for installation of the memorial in Rutland's Main Street Park, but we will proceed as completion of the design permits.

State Council: Next State Council meeting is Saturday, April 18, at 11 a.m. at the VFW club rooms. Dick Doyle noted that terms of our current three delegates expire in October, and we need candidates, plus one for an alternate. Dick plans to take a break. Other delegates are Bill Picknell and Tom Reardon. Steve Faye is vice president.

Scott Anderson described a trip he is taking to Vietnam in a couple of weeks with others he served with in the 196th Light Infantry. The unit is featured in the book, "The Magnificent Bastards," by Dick Knowland. The trip will include Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), Hanoi and areas around Dong Ha, where the unit served. The group will meet with Ambassador Pete Peterson.

Elections

President: Dick Doyle nominated John Bergeron for a fourth term as president. Second: Jon Pintello. Unanimous approval.

Vice President: Jon Pintello nominated Steve Faye. Second: Dick Doyle. Unanimous.

Secretary: Jon Pintello nominated Jack Crowther. Second: Scott Anderson. Unanimous.

Treasurer: Dick Doyle nominated Jon Pintello. Second Bill Whitney. Unanimous.

Board of Directors: Nominated were Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Scott Anderson and Dave Jarvie. Approved unanimously. The officers are also board members.

Harriet Thorne was named associate member liaison. She described her recent visit to the Vietnam War Memorial, "The Wall," in Washington, D.C. The "Moving Wall" will be in Lyndonville June 12-14.

Next Chapter 1 meeting will be May 2 at 6 p.m. at the VFW club rooms.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Jack Crowther
Secretary

VVA CHAPTER 1 MINUTES OF AUG. 1, 1998
VFW Club Rooms, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 6:18 p.m. Six members attended.

Dick Doyle said current membership was about 125.

President John Bergeron gave an informal financial report. Chapter 1 has about $4,900 in the bank. Bruno's in West Rutland sent in another $500 from the sale of ripoff tickets.

John has ordered more Chapter 1 T-shirts.

The Color Guard will participate in a parade Aug. 15 in Proctor.

Dick Doyle noted that new members include Jim Ryan, who was a navigator on a B-52 bomber, and Julie McMillan of Burlington. The chapter's newest life member is Donald Robichaud of Harvard, Mass., who has also made a $1,000 donation to the chapter.

Dick Doyle moved to appropriate $125 for support of the Aug. 8 VVA picnic at the Veterans Home in Bennington. Seconded by Andy Moschetto. Passed unanimously.

Heather Brower of Rutland and her parents, John and Nancy, attended to receive the chapter's $250 scholarship. Heather will attend SUNY and study theater. Heather was awarded the scholarship for her work on a Rutland High School play about a family visiting the Vietnam Wall.

Construction can start on the Rutland Vietnam Veterans Memorial after the area is measured and staked and the contractor has room in his schedule. The sculpture by Don Ramey is nearly complete. Larry Bolgioni will donate the POW-MIA flag.

Next Chapter 1 meeting will be Sept. 12 at 5 p.m. at the VFW club rooms.

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Jack Crowther
Secretary

VVA CHAPTER 1 MINUTES OF SEPT. 12, 1998
Downtown Has Sole, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 5:40 p.m. Seven members in attendance, including John Wagner, a new face.

Minutes of the August meeting read and approved.

An informal treasurer's report indicated about $4,845 in our account.

President John Bergeron said Roger Jimmo of Bristol would become a life member, bringing our lifetime membership to about 30. Current membership stands at about 130.

John Bergeron said he had spent $290 on new T-shirts and had already sold 7 or 8. He described the new Chapter 1 jackets, which cost about $51, including a 16-inch logo on the back.

Dodge Development Center, or Dodge House, the halfway house for veterans on Crescent Street in Rutland, is open and has three residents already, with a fourth expected soon. Each client will cost about $5,000 annually to support, and veterans groups are being asked to contribute to the expenses. If a resident is working, 20 percent of their pay goes to Dodge House, with half of that set aside in an account for the resident when they leave. The set-aside is then matched for the departing resident by a grant.

Jon Pintello moved to donate $1,000 to Dodge Development Center, to be donated in quarterly installments, beginning Oct. 1, 1998. Jean Bushey seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Jack Crowther announced that the Wild Woods Music Coop would hold a benefit concert Friday, Oct. 16, from 7:30 - 10:30 p.m. at Amelia's Canteen at the Vermont State Airport in North Clarendon.

John Bergeron read a letter from Heather Brower, thanking the chapter for the scholarship awarded by Chapter 1.

Acting on a request of Steve Faye, Tom Bushey made a motion that Chapter 1 meetings be smoke-free. Second by Jon Pintello. Passed unanimously.

It was revealed that Chapter 1 was suspended from the national organization for failure to file the Annual Financial Report. A change in the format and the need to research the information resulted in a delay in filing the report, which has now been filed and should result in reinstatement.

Andy Moschetto said he had received an offer from a program of the Rutland Garden Club to take care of the gardens at the Rutland Vietnam Veterans Memorial, when it is completed. Stanley Dolski reported that Sheldon Slate of Granville, N.Y., was willing to donate slate tiles to the memorial.

The members present decided to take no stand as a chapter on the case of Joe Yandle. Jane Yandle, his former wife, appeared and provided addresses for those interested in supporting him: Joe Yandle, MCI Concord, P.O. Box 9106, West Concord, MA 01742-9106. Also, the Massachusetts Parole Board, 27-43 Wormwood St., Suite 300, Boston, MA 02210 and Governor's Executive Council, State House, Room 184, Boston, MA 02133.

Next meeting is Oct. 3 at 5 p.m. at Downtdown Has Sole.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Jack Crowther
Secretary

HIGHLIGHTS OF SEPT. 12, 1998, MEETING

The chapter unanimously approved a donation of $1,000 to the Dodge Development Center, to be made in quarterly payments beginning Oct. 1, 1998. The recently opened center has three clients already with a fourth expected. The Wild Woods Music Coop will hold a benefit concert Friday, Oct. 16, from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. at Amelia's Canteen at the Vermont State Airport.

A new supply of T-shirts is for sale at $10 per shirt. Chapter jackets can now be purchased for approximately $51, with a 16-inch chapter logo on the back.

The chapter has voted to make all its meetings be smoke-free.

A program of the Rutland Garden Club has offered to maintain the Rutland Vietnam Veterans Memorial plantings when the memorial is completed.

VVA CHAPTER 1 MINUTES OF NOV. 7, 1998
Downtown Has Sole, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 5:15 p.m. About a dozen members were in attendance, including Paul Virtue of Cambridge, N.Y., a new face.

President John Bergeron said the chapter has about $4,500 in the bank, according to the last bank statement. Bruno's Bar in West Rutland is the main source of our income. The chapter has paid $250 as the first quarterly installment on a one-year pledge of $1,000 to the Dodge Development Center. The board of Chapter I approved spending $250 as its share of the cost of the VVA organizational license plate. Any member will be able to receive the plate.

After some discussion of chapter jackets, Bill Whitney moved to designate black or green as the color of VVA jackets. 2nd: Tom Reardon. Passed unanimously.

Following discussion initiated by Kym Hoerr, Andy Moschetto moved that Chapter 1 send a letter to state officials saying the chapter opposes the $10 fee for the state veteran's license plate unless the fee goes to support of the Veterans Home in Bennington. 2nd: Kym Hoerr. Passed unanimously. Secretary Jack Crowther will write the letters.

State VVA President John Miner has been to the Washington VVA headquarters, but has not yet reported his findings.

Tom Reardon noted the Nov. 11 ceremony at the American Legion in Rutland. He asked if the Color Guard should take part in the Toys for Tots Parade Nov. 22 in Glens Falls, N.Y. After discussion, Tom moved the chapter spend $25 for a gift as the entry fee for the parade. 2nd: Bill Whitney. Passed unanimously.

Membership: Dick Doyle said the chapter has about 125 members currently. Beginning in 1999, an individual's membership will begin when they join and continue for a year, instead of the current system of all memberships expiring in February.

Dick said on Dec. 8, an informational meeting will be held in Essex Junction with regard to starting a new chapter of VVA in the Burlington area. The St. Albans chapter is spearheading the effort.

Members who don't get a renewal notice for memberships, all of which expires in February, should contact John or Dick. Dues can be mailed in or paid to John or Dick. The national organization, rather than the chapters, will control the issuance of membership cards. Beginning next year, membership will end one year after joining, rather than on a common date.

John will find out whether Chapter 1 has been reinstated to the national organization after being suspended for not filing a timely financial report.

Andy Moschetto, reporting on the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial suggested that the chapter get all "its ducks lined up" in anticipation of having it complete by Memorial Day of 1999. Andy will contact Harriet Thorne about putting notices in town reports regarding eligibility for inclusion on the memorial. The veteran must have been a resident of Rutland County at the time he or she entered the service. Jack Crowther will check with Green Screen Graphics on the sign for the memorial and pedestals for the Lexan boxes. John Bergeron will see whether the concrete pad for the memorial can be poured this fall.

Dick Doyle reported that associate members of VVA will need their own organization, due to tax requirements of the IRS. He passed out a memo from national VVA on this issue. There is a fear this will cost the organization some members. Chapter 1 has about 15 associate members, that is, members who don't meet the military period-of-service requirements of regular membership. This change was made at

the national level, but Dick sees little change in the associates' manner of participation in the chapter activities. Associate members have never been able to vote on chapter issues.

Dick said the Women's Memorial in Washington needed support to pay off a remaining large debt. Andy Moschetto moved the chapter contribute $100 to help reduce the debt. 2nd: Tom Reardon. Passed unanimously.

A faxed letter from Joe Yandle's attorney regarding his impending parole hearing was passed out to members. In accord with the consensus at the previous meeting, the chapter took no action.

Next meeting will be Dec. 5 at 5 p.m. at John Bergeron's store, Downtown Has Sole.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Jack Crowther
Secretary

Attachments: VVA national memo re. IRS and associate members; letter from lawyer Curtis Moner on behalf of Joe Yandle

VVA CHAPTER 1 MINUTES OF DEC. 5, 1998
Downtown Has Sole, Rutland

Meeting called to order at 5:14 p.m. Six members were in attendance. State VVA Council President John Miner attended to report on state and national issues.

Minutes of Nov. 7 meeting were read and approved.

Informal financial report: President John Bergeron said the chapter had about $5,000 in the bank. There were only minor expenses in the past month.

Regarding the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial, John met with Ernie Smalley, the contractor volunteering his services. Ernie recommended not doing any construction this fall due to the added expense of pouring concrete in cold weather. John has been in touch with Laurie Wilson, a drafting instructor at the Stafford Technical Center, who has agreed to have students prepare drawings of the memorial site.

Jack Crowther submitted a report on preparation of the sign for the memorial and what is needed to install the Lexan-and-metal display boxes in the memorial.

Dick Doyle reported a new life member, Roberto Eaton (sp?), who lives in Paraguay.

Not enough members were present to vote on paying $100 owed to the State Council of VVA.

Dick Doyle described the Friends of Vermont Veterans group, whose name will soon be changed to Friends of Veterans to allow it to serve New Hampshire as well. The group evolved in the last six months to a year to assist homeless and near-homeless veterans. The group has helped more than 70 veterans. Support has come from another VVA chapter, and Dick hopes Chapter 1 will support the group as well.

Jack Crowther suggested setting up a trust fund for funding groups like the Friends, as well as the Dodge House. Dick and John Miner, state VVA president, who was visiting, both noted that other groups often have two or more sets of books for daily expenses and for special kinds of contributions, such as to veterans welfare causes like the Friends.

Bill Whitney reported that Rep. Bernie Sanders wants to open an investigation of Agent Orange again. John Miner elaborated, explaining that the Ranch Hand Report on Agent Orange had been toned down in its references to things like birth defects, according to a report in the San Diego Tribune. The Tribune's report has triggered calls for an investigation of why the report was changed..

John Miner explained the license plate legislation change that the VVA is supporting. The current law allows members of veterans and "safety" organizations to have a special license plate, but requires payment of an annual fee, which goes into state coffers. The change supported by VVA would change the law to require a one-time $10 fee, with funds generated devoted to the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. Meanwhile, the veterans plate should be available within 60 days for vets buying a new car or renewing their registration.

John handed out an Agent Orange survey for wives of Vietnam veterans. Filling it out is voluntary.

John handed out a "Vietnam poppy" in green, yellow and red, which can be used as a fund-raising giveaway similar to the poppies used by other veterans groups. The West Virginia State Council originated the idea and can arrange for the purchase of quantities of poppies.

John Miner, who is also veterans affairs coordinator at the Vermont Veterans Home, described a grounds enhancement project at the home, involving the display of flags from other states. Organizations are being approached to supply flagpoles.

John also reported on the budget at the VA hospital, noting that after a major cut was mitigated by a further appropriation, which was supported by Sens. Jeffords and Leahy, the hospital is still looking at an $800,000 shortfall, compared to the current year.

John also reported on the IRS crackdown that has required that VVA set up a separate organization for associate members, that is members such as spouses who do not meet the time-of-service requirements of regular membership. John was emphatic that VVA does not want an "auxiliary" type of organization. "We're family and friends," he said, noting that associates often raise more money for the group than the veterans. "We don't want to lose what we have," John said. However, no cledar plan has emerged for how the associates' organization will be structured.

On another matter, John Miner noted that the State Council needs people to serve on committees. He noted that the delegates to the State Council should "bring things to the State Coucil, not just listen to me."

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Next meeting will be Jan. 9 at 5 p.m. at Downtown Has Sole.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DEC. 5 MEETING

The meeting featured a visit and report on various issues by John Miner of Bennington, state VVA Council president. Among the things reported by John were these:

- VVA is supporting a change in the legislation for veterans and "safety" organization license plates that would change the $10 annual fee to a one-time fee of $10. Under the change, any surplus monies above the production cost would go to support of the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington.

- After threatened cuts and budget restorations, the VA Hospital in White River Junction now faces an $800,000 shortfall next year compared to current funding.

- Agent Orange is again a current issue, with investigation of the Air Force's Ranch Hand report in the offing, due to an expose in the San Diego Tribune. The newspaper reported that the Ranch Hand report had been toned down in its references to topics like birth defects. Bernie Sanders is said to be pushing for the investigation. A voluntary Agent Orange survey of servicemen's wives is available for those who wish to complete it.

- Associate members are going to have to have their own organization, under a crackdown by the IRS on rules for non-profit organizations. John was emphatic that the VVA would not create an "auxiliary" but wanted to continue the "family and friends" unified spirit of the current organization.

In other action, Dick Doyle discussed Friends of Vermont Veterans group, which evolved in the last six months to a year to assist homeless and near-homeless veterans. The group has helped more than 70 veterans. Dick hopes Chapter 1 will support the group as well. Chapter 1 could follow the practice of other veterans groups in establishing separate accounts for daily expenses and for special contributions to veterans welfare causes.